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20 December 1963

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CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE

BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

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Cuba:

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[redacted] the strength of the Cuban Army was about 100,000.

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[redacted] It may include both regular army and reserve personnel on active duty. Frequent call-ups of reserve personnel for temporary duty cause significant fluctuations in the size of the Cuban ground forces.

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US estimates have placed the strength of the Cuban standing army at about 75,000.

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Under the new compulsory service law, all males between 17 and 45 are subject to three years of military service. Implementation of this law will probably lead to some increase in the size of the standing army.

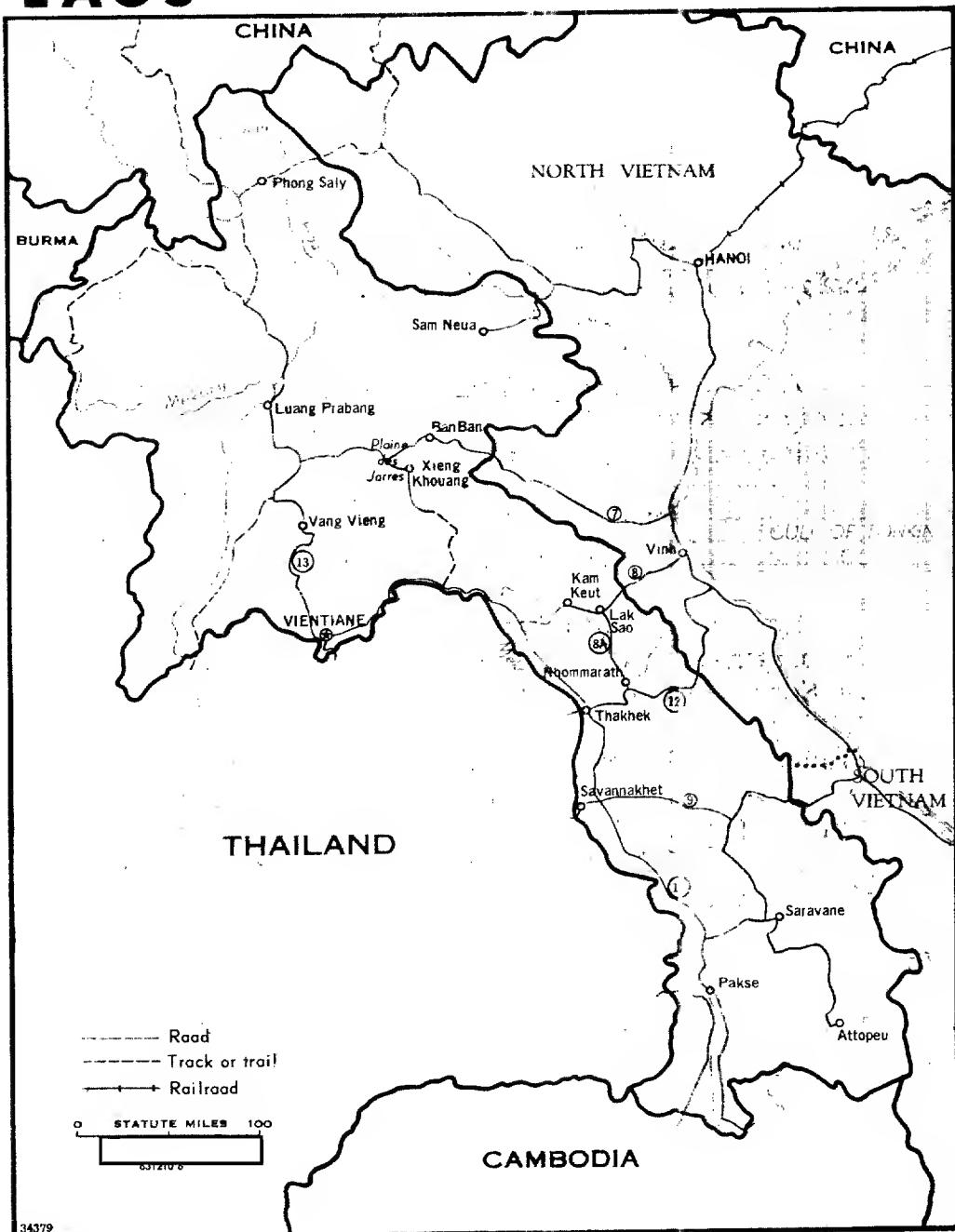
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Spain-Cuba: A deal providing for the exchange of Spanish ships for Cuban sugar may be in the making.

Spanish shipbuilders have undertaken to construct "100 naval units" for Cuba which are to be paid for with sugar. [redacted] the deal may come up for consideration at the cabinet level today.

*However, the US Embassy in Madrid suspects the original press report may have been inspired by the Spanish Government to impress the US with Madrid's possibilities for trade with Cuba. The Spanish shipbuilding director [redacted] said that the Cubans have approached a private company on the construction of ships but that limited facilities would permit the building of no more than five or six vessels.

LAOS



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NOTES

Laos: Communists appear to be moving to counter some of the recent rightist advances in central Laos. On 16 December a force reportedly consisting of one battalion of North Vietnamese troops recaptured the key road junction at Lak Sao, a position which right-wing forces had taken early this month. The Communists, however, still do not appear to want to press a counteroffensive to the point of jeopardizing chances for the talks that Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong recently indicated he wants with Premier Souvanna

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*Brazil: The resignation last night of Finance Minister Carvalho Pinto may open the way for greater leftist participation in President Goulart's cabinet. Although foreign trade coordinator Ney Galvao has reportedly been named temporary finance minister, Goulart has been under heavy pressure from the extreme left to replace Pinto, a political moderate, with someone such as Leonel Brizola, the President's pro-Castro brother-in-law. This pressure is expected to reach a peak today at a large leftist rally to be held in Rio de Janeiro.

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Ivory Coast: President Houphouet-Boigny has apparently again moved to reduce the influence of a possible rival. Recent arrests and deportations have included associates of ambitious National Assembly President Phillippe Yace, who had been emerging in recent months as the number two man in the Houphouet regime. Yace is in charge of the party militia, however, and he might react by trying to use it to bring off a palace coup.

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